

A Survey of Rooming Houses in the West End and Downtown Districts of Vancouver

Vancouver Housing Association, 1951

A SURVEY OF ROOMING- HOUSES

IN THE WEST END AND DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

OF VANCOUVER

VANCOUVER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

505 Hamilton Street

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. It is estimated that well over half the houses in the survey area (bounded roughly by Denman Street, False Creek and Burrard Inlet) have been converted to multiple occupancy. One hundred houses, or perhaps 6% of the total, were surveyed.
2. There is a marked difference in the character and quality of the houses in the areas lying east and west of Burrard Street respectively.

WEST OF BURRARD

3. The houses in this area, with some exceptions along the commercial thoroughfares, are, in general, well built and maintained. 70% of the houses surveyed were owner-occupied and the quality of management was above the average for this type of accommodation.
4. The most striking defect was the inadequacy of plumbing facilities. In terms of the Lodging House Bylaw, roughly half of the houses were deficient in bath and toilet facilities, and only 60% of the housekeeping units had sinks. Supplies of hot water are probably insufficient in many cases.
5. The failure of the City License Department in the past to clear with the Health, Building and Fire Departments before issuing new lodging house licenses has been a major factor in the development of this situation. A program to gradually bring plumbing and other facilities up to bylaw standards is advocated. An amendment to the Lodging House Bylaw legalizing housekeeping units of more than one room is required.
6. With 37 accidental deaths from gas poisoning in the City last year, the high proportion of instances where gas cooking appliances are located in rooms used for sleeping purposes constitutes a serious hazard. Over 90% of all housekeeping units were equipped with gas rings or stoves, and, at a rough estimate, not more than one-quarter of the single housekeeping rooms possessed a separate ventilated kitchenette.
7. Less than one-fifth of all housekeeping units had a ventilated cooler, as required under a recent amendment to the Lodging House Bylaw. Elimination of the unhygienic and unsightly soap box is overdue.
8. Very few tenants have the use of a garden. This is particularly serious for elderly people and young children, owing to the lack of local parks and playgrounds within easy walking distance. Additional small park areas are required in the district.
9. Single men and women constituted 72% of all tenancies. No less than 88% of the tenancies were provided with cooking facilities of some sort, indicating that few people can afford to eat all their meals out.

10. 9% of all single rooms surveyed were vacant. The relatively high vacancy rate is probably due, in part, to seasonal factors and, in part, to increasing competition from housekeeping installations, legal or otherwise, in the outer districts.
11. One-fifth of all tenancies consisted of married couples without children. The absence of vacancies among two- and three-room suites points up the lack of small self-contained apartments suitable for couples and professional women.
12. The typical rent range in this district runs from \$4.00 to \$7.00 per room per week, and for two-room suites, from \$6.00 to \$10.00 a week. Rent normally includes furniture, heat, electricity and, sometimes, gas.
13. The rent of an average housekeeping room in this area is beyond the means of pensioners. They are too often found, in consequence, in attics or basements, accommodation ill-suited to their needs.
14. There are relatively few families with children in the area under survey, and the great majority only stay for a short time, until they can find something more suitable. With few exceptions they occupy unsatisfactory accommodation in basements, attics and run-down houses. Most of them could pay rents of \$40 or more a month if houses were available. Provision of moderate rental family accommodation is an urgent need.

EAST OF BURRARD

15. The houses to the east of Burrard Street are for the most part small, flimsily built and very poorly maintained. Under one-quarter of the houses surveyed were owner-occupied; and, with demolition of buildings to make way for commercial developments proceeding rapidly, landlords spend a minimum on upkeep.
16. Two-thirds of the tenancies surveyed were occupied by single men, many of them transients or in seasonal occupations. The high vacancy rate of 23% for single rooms may have been influenced by seasonal factors.
17. Plumbing and heating equipment is generally deficient. Nearly half the houses surveyed lacked central heating; only 17% of the housekeeping rooms had sinks; in four out of five cases, cooking was done on a gas ring.
18. In view of the rapid obsolescence of the houses, full compliance with the Lodging House Bylaws cannot reasonably be expected. Specific insanitary conditions should, however, be remedied; and, in particular, all families with children found suitable accommodation elsewhere as soon as possible. Of 21 children reported in the houses surveyed, 15 were living in accommodation which was due for condemnation.

A SURVEY OF ROOMING HOUSES
in the
WEST END AND DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS OF VANCOUVER

Scope and Purpose of the Survey

A field survey of rooming houses in the West End and Downtown districts was carried out by the Vancouver Housing Association between the months of July and October, 1951. The survey was conducted by a small group of volunteers, to whom the thanks of the Association are due. The Association is particularly indebted to Mr. W. F. Paterson, formerly with the City Social Service Department, and now in receipt of a scholarship in Community Planning at the University of B.C., who carried out much of the work.

The principal purpose of the survey was to determine the adequacy, in terms both of quality and quantity, of existing rooming house accommodation, and to obtain data on the occupancy of such accommodation. No attempt was made to assess the structural condition of the houses, except insofar as it directly affected the livability of the accommodation.

The area covered by the survey included the whole of the West End lying between Denman and Burrard Streets, and the area lying east of Burrard between False Creek and Dunsmuir Street. The area west of Denman Street was not included in the survey, since rooming houses are not a major factor in this rapidly-developing apartment house district.

A random sample of 100 dwellings from those listed as rooming houses in the City Directory for 1950, was selected for survey. Large buildings designed specifically as lodging houses, and containing more than 20 rentable units, were excluded from the survey, but this type of building is not numerous in the area under study. All self-contained units were also ignored: the survey was thus confined to dwellings originally designed for single-family use, but now in multiple occupancy.

All but two of the houses surveyed were of frame construction, and the great majority were two or two-and-a-half storeys in height.

The total number of dwellings in the area listed in the City Directory as rooming houses was 925. This figure represents some 30% of all dwellings, other than apartments houses, etc. But a spot check of 27 dwellings not listed as rooming houses showed that nearly half of them were actually in multiple occupancy. It is therefore probably safe to estimate that well over half the houses in the area have been converted to rooming house use and, of the larger houses, there can be very few which are still in single occupancy. Distribution of rooming houses throughout the area is **relatively** even.

There was a marked difference in the quality of accommodation in the area east of Burrard Street as compared with that to the west. The statistical data has, therefore, been kept separate for these two districts.

THE AREA BOUNDED BY DENMAN STREET, BURRARD INLET, BURRARD STREET, AND ENGLISH BAY

The number of houses covered by the survey in this area was 73. While the houses are, in general, well past their prime, the great majority have been maintained in a fair state of repair and are structurally sound enough to provide an adequate standard of living accommodation.

Types of Accommodation Provided

The total number of rooms, rented or vacant, in the houses surveyed was 736, giving an average of 10 rooms per house. Of these rooms, 11% were attic rooms and 6% basement rooms. Some of the basement rooms were little below ground level, but, generally speaking, this type of accommodation had little to recommend it; and, in view of the recent prohibition of the construction of basement suites, should be gradually eliminated.

The rooms were rented as follows:

	<u>Units</u>	<u>Rooms</u>
As sleeping rooms	65	65
As housekeeping rooms	317	317
As two-room housekeeping suites	118	236
As three-room housekeeping suites	38	114
As four-room housekeeping suites	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	539	736

For statistical purposes, all rooms where cooking facilities of any sort were provided have been treated as housekeeping rooms, even though in a large proportion of cases these facilities simply consist of a two-ring gas plate.

Similarly, a housekeeping unit in this report signifies any room or suite of rooms occupied by one household with cooking facilities, but without a separate bath-room or toilet.

Rooms with kitchens or kitchenettes of under 50 square feet were reckoned as one room, of over 50 square feet as two rooms. As, however, it was naturally impossible to inspect every room, the operator's classification had, in most cases, to be accepted. In some cases the kitchenette would be merely partitioned off from the main room; in others, it would be little more than a cupboard; but at a very rough estimate, perhaps one-quarter of the single housekeeping rooms possess a properly ventilated kitchenette.

Vacancies

Of the sleeping rooms and the single housekeeping rooms, approximately 9% were reported as vacant. In the case of the two- and three-room suites, however, there were virtually no vacancies.

There has been a noticeable easing in the demand for rooming house accommodation during the last year. In view of the continued influx of population into the Province, many of whom normally settle initially in the central districts of the city, this relatively high rate of vacancies for single rooms is at first sight surprising. It is possible that the demand for labour in the up-country districts has drawn off an above-normal proportion of the floating labour population, for whom the rooming house constitutes a temporary home, but probably the most important factor is the

spread of multiple occupancy uses into two-family and single-family zones in the outer districts.

For the average single person, and for those couples who cannot afford a self-contained apartment, a housekeeping room with a properly equipped kitchen or kitchenette provides, under competent management, quite adequate accommodation. While, therefore, the rooming house must be given due recognition in the City Bylaws, it should, as a multiple occupancy use, be confined to areas zoned for this purpose.

The absence of vacancies in two- and three-room suites points up the need for more small self-contained suites to meet the needs of childless couples and of professional women who wish to share an apartment. One-fifth of all housekeeping units were rented to couples without children.

Occupancy

There is relatively little overcrowding evident in rooming houses in the West End. This can be attributed partly to the fact that in this area there are relatively few families with children living in such accommodation (though where there are any, they are usually overcrowded); and partly to the fact that the supply of accommodation for single people is now more adequate.

The average density of occupation was almost exactly one person per room and under 6% of the houses were occupied at a density of more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ persons per room.

Occupancy of rooms and suites was as follows:

	<u>Units</u>
Single man	150
Two men	12
Single woman	181
Two women	17
Three women	2
Married couples	106
Families with children	34
Vacant	37
	<hr/>
Total	539
	<hr/>

Cooking Facilities

Of all rooms rented singly, as few as 17% were rented as sleeping rooms only. This figure points up the strong demand for some sort of housekeeping facilities among single people. The average tenant simply cannot afford to eat all his or her meals in restaurants.

In many cases, however, particularly where men are concerned, the amount of cooking done is limited and an electric plate is all they require to boil an egg or make a cup of tea.

Unfortunately, as the following figures show, gas is by far the most common means of cooking employed.

Gas plates	40%
Gas stoves	52%
Electric plates	7%
Other	1%
	<hr/>
	100%

Gas stoves, as might be expected, are most commonly found in suites with a kitchen or kitchenette.

Recent deaths from gas poisoning have drawn attention to the dangers of gas cooking facilities in rooms used for sleeping purposes. In a limited number of cases, these facilities are provided in a separate ventilated kitchenette, but more often there is no effective separation of the cooking facilities.

The substitution of electric plates for gas rings would eliminate the danger, but from the operator's point of view, there are often objections to this step. Firstly there is the risk of overloading the electric circuit, involving heavy rewiring costs. However, since many of the electrical installations in these houses are old and will require replacement in any case before very long, this objection loses some of its weight. Secondly, gas is frequently metered, whereas it is more difficult to meter electricity separately to the tenant. Thirdly, in the poorer type of rooming house, e.g., east of Burrard, the gas ring sometimes serves as a supplementary means of room-heating in cold weather. Nevertheless, the risks involved in the use of gas cooking facilities in rooms used for sleeping purposes are so serious that it appears essential for the City Health Department to take drastic action to restrict this practice.

Food Storage

A recent amendment to the Lodging House Bylaws requires that every housekeeping room shall contain a ventilated food storage locker of not less than two cubic feet.

Less than one-fifth of the housekeeping rooms included in the survey complied with this requirement and the traditional soapbox is still the customary method of food storage. This practice is unhygienic, inefficient and unsightly. It probably does more than any one other thing to give a district a shabby down-at-the-heel appearance.

The cost of installing a properly screened and ventilated cupboard is not great and the City Health Department are to be commended on the steps they are taking to raise the general standard of practice in this respect.

Heating and Hot Water

All but 4% of the houses surveyed in the area west of Burrard had central heating of some sort. It was not possible to form any accurate opinion of the adequacy of heat supplied. In those rooms originally designed for living purposes, the supply of heat is probably in the great majority of cases adequate. There are, however, a considerable number of attic rooms, enclosed verandahs, etc., not originally intended for occupation, where the poor supply of heat or lack of insulation must be a source of considerable discomfort to the occupants.

It was also impracticable to obtain any valid statistical data on the adequacy of the supply of hot water, but bearing in mind the number of persons using plumbing and heating equipment originally designed for a considerably smaller household, it is evident that this question must present a problem in many cases. Colour is lent to this

deduction by the fact that more than one operator attributed their absence of vacancies to the fact that they always had lots of hot water. Further, the survey by questionnaire of accommodation for single girls carried out by the Vancouver Housing Association (see the Report, "We, Too, Need Housing") in 1950 showed that lack of adequate supplies of hot water was by far the commonest cause of complaint among tenants of rooming house accommodation.

Lighting

In an appreciable number of houses, the lighting of halls and stairways was inadequate. 15 watt bulbs were commonly used and it is doubtful whether the illumination provided in such cases would satisfy the requirements of the Fire Chief.

Gardens

In only a very few cases was the landlord's garden available for the use of the tenants. There was thus no place for elderly people to sit out or for young children to play. This is particularly serious in view of the total absence of small local parks or play lots to serve the area, other than the Denman Street grounds. Many older people and young kids cannot walk as far as Stanley Park or the beaches and the lack of any private or public open space, where they can enjoy a little sun and air, represents a very serious deficiency in the amenities of life available to residents of the West End. Additional small park areas should be acquired for this purpose.

Plumbing Facilities

The Lodging House Bylaw requires that every housekeeping room shall be provided with a sink. In the houses surveyed, no less than 40% of all units provided with cooking facilities were without a sink or washbasin.

The number of sleeping rooms fitted with washbasins is negligible. The position is further aggravated by the fact that the common bathroom facilities are often inadequate also.

The Lodging House Bylaw further requires that there shall be one bath or shower and one toilet and washbasin for every three housekeeping units or less. If all units equipped with cooking facilities are classified as housekeeping rooms, even on a generous interpretation of this regulation, half of the houses surveyed failed to come up to the above standard. In 23% of the cases, there were seven or more people sharing one bathroom and in two cases there were 15 people using one bathroom.

The lack of sanitary facilities is by far the most unsatisfactory feature of the rooming house situation, since the sharing of overloaded facilities is a potent source of discomfort, friction and contagion. The installation of additional plumbing facilities in an old house is often a costly undertaking and it is obviously impracticable to require all rooming houses to be brought up to the minimum prescribed standards immediately. Nevertheless, most of the houses in this area still have a considerable useful life ahead of them and every effort should be made to secure a substantial improvement in existing conditions and, in particular, to make sure that all newly licensed houses adhere to these standards.

It is very regrettable that, owing to the failure of the City License Department in the past to consult with the Building, Health and Fire Departments before issuing a new lodging house license, many houses have been converted to rooming house use without observance of the regulations governing this type of accommodation. It is to

be hoped that this situation will not be allowed to recur. It is no less necessary that existing unlicensed rooming houses be brought under bylaw control.

It may be added that it is to the operator's own interest that reasonable standards should be enforced, since one or two 'bad apples' can quickly infect a whole district and lower its residential status.

By definition, a housekeeping room can only consist of one room and there is no provision in the bylaws for housekeeping suites consisting, say, of a sleeping room and a kitchen. Strictly interpreted, therefore, every housekeeping suite of two or more rooms must have a bath and toilet of its own. This means that the very arrangement which should be encouraged, whereby people cook and eat in a separate room from that in which they sleep, is rendered illegal under the bylaw.

It is obviously both impractical and unnecessary to expect every suite of one room and a kitchen to have its own bathroom and this ridiculous situation should be remedied immediately.

The Lodging House Bylaw, as we have seen, requires one bath and one toilet for every three housekeeping rooms. On the other hand, only one bathroom and one toilet are required for every 12 and 10 sleeping rooms respectively.

As the survey figures show, the great majority of rooms in the average rooming house are equipped with some sort of cooking facilities and there is little difference in the occupancy of the two classes of accommodation. In fact, since sleeping rooms rarely possess a washbasin, whereas housekeeping rooms are often equipped with a sink, the use made of bathroom facilities may well be greater in the case of occupants of a sleeping room than of a housekeeping room.

As things stand, moreover, where both sleeping and housekeeping rooms exist in the same house, it is virtually impossible to apply the bylaws in a sensible manner, since, strictly speaking, the existence of even one sleeping room should require a separate bathroom, additional to those required for the housekeeping rooms.

It would therefore appear more logical to require the same plumbing facilities for all rooms in those buildings where any cooking facilities are provided. This standard might be set rather lower than that at present required for housekeeping rooms only. This proposed change would not apply to regular lodging houses for transients, where no cooking facilities at all are provided.

Management and Maintenance

In general, the quality of management of rooming houses in this district is well above the average for this class of accommodation. In under 10% of the houses visited was the management specifically rated as poor. In the majority of these cases, the houses were situated on or adjacent to a commercial street, and the importance of zoning as a protection to residential uses was very evident. From Robson Street north, however, dwellings are rapidly giving place to commercial buildings and some of this poorer accommodation is being eliminated in the process.

The high proportion of homeowners in this district is an important factor in the above connection, since owner-occupiers are much more likely to keep their houses in good repair than an absentee landlord. No less than 70% of the houses surveyed were occupied by the owner, and a further 8% were managed by a caretaker for the owner, leaving only 22% of the houses rented by the operator.

A second favourable factor is the good revenues earned by rooming house

operators in recent years, enabling them to put money back into their buildings.

A third factor, which is now beginning to operate, is the relatively high rate of vacancies compared with the saturation conditions of recent years, since operators are being induced to make improvements to their premises in order to maintain a full house.

Rents

Rooming house rents normally include furniture and electricity, in addition to heat and hot water; they frequently include linen and, as far as men are concerned, possibly some room service also. Gas for cooking is usually metered, particularly where regular kitchenettes are provided; but quite often it is included in the rent.

Operators were asked to state the range of their rents, i.e., the highest and lowest rent for each type of accommodation. While the tendency would no doubt be for the operator to understate rather than to overstate his rent level, it is believed that the figures quoted below are reasonably accurate.

Rents of One-Room Suites

<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
\$10-13	(\$2.50)	11%	--
\$14-18	(\$3.50-4.00)	24%	--
\$19-22	(\$4.50-5.00)	30%	22%
\$23-27	(\$6.00)	20%	25%
\$30-34	(\$7.00-7.50)	15%	33%
\$38-47	(\$10.00)	--	20%
		100%	100%

As will be seen from the above figures, the typical rent range for one-room suites is from \$4.00 to \$7.00 per week. The accommodation provided varies widely, from a small scantily furnished bedroom to a large room with a well-equipped kitchenette.

The typical rent range for two-room suites is from \$6.00 to \$10.00 per week. The great majority of tenancies are on a weekly basis.

While there is little question that not all rents conform to the rent control regulations, it was not possible to determine the extent of evasion. It was evident, however, that relatively few tenants knew what the controlled rent for their accommodation was, or even that it was controlled.

However, the recent increase in the vacancy rate should tend to hold down rents to some extent, should rent controls be removed.

Families with Children

Approximately one-third of the houses surveyed contained (lodging) families with children, with a total of 34 families and 44 children. Of the children, some two-thirds were under 10 years of age. The great majority occupy two- and three-room suites. One-half of these families were interviewed personally. Of those who gave information, 80% had lived in their present rooms for six months or less and only one had lived there as long as three years.

Every family, except those who had just moved in, said they wished to move, the great majority wanting a house of their own. Most of them were paying rents ranging from \$30 to \$50 a month, with an average of \$38. In many cases, this was a good deal more than the accommodation was worth, but the absence of alternative accommodation and the reluctance of landlords to accept children inevitably forces up rents against them. When asked what they could afford to pay for a house of their own, the majority mentioned a figure between \$40 and \$50 a month. 30% of the families interviewed did not have a private sink or washbasin; in two cases, they shared bathroom facilities with 12 or more other tenants.

It is clear from the above figures that the average family with children only moves into a rooming house because they cannot find any self-contained accommodation within their means and that they move out again as soon as they can find more suitable quarters. It is also apparent that a large proportion of families in this area could pay a normal economic rent (for an older house) if the accommodation was available.

The average rooming house operator is, naturally enough, very reluctant to accept families with children and the accommodation is generally quite unsuited to their needs. There can be only one solution: to increase the supply of moderate rental family accommodation.

Old People

There are over 900 old age pensioners living in this area (west of Burrard St.). For this group, the normal rent of a housekeeping room in this district is beyond their means. Only 15% of operators reporting had any rooms renting for \$15 or less, though instances were noted of pensioners paying a rent of \$20 out of their income of \$50 or so a month. For the most part, however, pensioners are found in the poorest rooms, often in attics or basements; the very accommodation, in fact, which is most unsuited to their needs.

There are, however, also a few operators who cater especially to this class of tenant, at relatively low rents, either out of the goodness of their heart, or because the general quality of the accommodation they have to offer is inferior. One or two again provide full board and lodging in return for their pension or social assistance money.

The need, now recognized, for specially designed accommodation to meet the requirements of this group at rents they can afford to pay, was strongly borne out by the survey.

THE AREA BOUNDED BY BURRARD STREET, DUNSMUIR STREET, AND FALSE CREEK

As previously noted, there is a very marked contrast between the houses in the area EAST OF BURRARD STREET as compared with those to the WEST. East of Burrard, the houses are for the most part small and poorly built. The great majority have nearly reached the end of their useful life and not a few have already passed it, as evidenced by the actual collapse of more than one building in recent years.

Accommodation and Occupancy

The number of dwelling houses other than apartments listed in the City Directory for 1950 for this area was approximately 800, of which 30% were recorded as rooming houses, but the actual percentage in multiple occupancy was almost certainly considerably greater. The random sample of 27 houses surveyed is not large enough to do more than indicate generally the type of accommodation and tenancy found in this area. The average number of rentable rooms per house was approximately seven, and of the total, roughly 70% were rented as single rooms and 30% as two- or three-room suites.

The detailed breakdown of the accommodation was as follows:

Single sleeping rooms	24
Single housekeeping rooms	117
Two-room housekeeping suites	18
Three-room housekeeping suites	6
Total	<u>165</u>

It should be noted, however, that the great majority of the housekeeping rooms merely have a gas ring and no sink, and since a large proportion of the occupants are single transient men, relatively little cooking is probably done.

The vacancy rate in this area at the time of the survey was high, 23% of the single rooms and 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of the two- and three-room suites being vacant. This rate may have been influenced by seasonal factors, since the survey was carried out during the summer months and many of the tenants are single men engaged in seasonal occupations.

The composition of the tenant population was as follows:

	<u>Households</u>
Single men	80
Two men sharing	4
Single women	22
Couples without children	14
Families with children	10
Vacant	<u>35</u>
Total	<u>165</u>

The high proportion of single men will be noted. The figures also show there is little or no overcrowding, except among families.

As few as 22% of the houses surveyed were owner-occupied, the rest being either rented by the operator or managed for the owner. Rents paid by operators commonly range from \$38 to \$55 a month.

Nearly half the houses surveyed east of Burrard Street appeared from superficial inspection to be in poor structural condition and it is evident that, generally speaking, the landlords do not spend a cent more than they have to on upkeep, since they are holding the property primarily for the ultimate selling value of the land. In 26% of the houses the management was rated as poor, or only fair. In many cases, however, the operators did their best to keep their places clean and tidy, in spite of the poor physical condition of their houses.

Plumbing and Heating

If all rooms provided with cooking facilities are regarded as housekeeping rooms, the great majority of the houses are deficient in bath and toilet facilities in terms of the Lodging House Bylaw, though, owing to the under-occupancy of much of the accommodation, actual conditions were not, in most cases, too unsatisfactory. In one instance, however, where a family with two young children were living in a single basement room with no sink, they shared bath and toilet facilities with 14 other people. In another house, which housed four families with children, 19 people shared two baths and toilets.

Only 17% of all housekeeping units were fitted with sinks, while in four out of five units, cooking was done on a gas ring.

Little more than half the houses surveyed in the area east of Burrard Street were centrally heated. In the other cases, the majority of the rooms were heated by individual coal or wood stoves, but in a few instances, the only source of heat was from a gas ring or from a stove in the hall. The lack of adequate heating facilities, particularly in view of the flimsy construction of most of the houses, is one of the worst features of the houses in this area.

Rents

Room rents in this district, as might be expected from the quality of the available accommodation, are lower than to the west of Burrard. The lowest rents charged (per house) ranged from \$9 to \$24 per room per month, with a heavy concentration between \$15 and \$22 a month. Highest rents ranged from \$17 to \$30 per room per month, with the heaviest concentration between \$24 and \$30. From \$3.50 to \$7.50 per week may thus be regarded as the typical rent range for rooms in this district. Two-room suites range from \$4 to \$8 a week.

Families

Only one-quarter of the houses surveyed contained tenant families with children, but of the 21 children reported, no less than 15 were living in accommodation which was stated by tenants to be slated for condemnation as soon as alternative accommodation could be found for the occupants.

As surveys conducted in other areas have already shown only too clearly, it is just those households for whom the consequences of bad housing are most serious, who are forced into the worst accommodation, and it should be unnecessary by now to point out that, quite apart from any moral responsibility for these unfortunate families, the cost to the community of leaving them to live in squalid conditions, will, in the long run, far exceed the cost of providing them with decent accommodation.

Enforcement of Bylaw

The conversion of this area to business uses is proceeding very rapidly. Demolition of buildings in the city is taking place at an annual rate of 200 buildings a year, and the great bulk of these buildings are no doubt dwellings located in the central business districts.

In view of this fact and of the limited remaining life of most of the houses in this area, it would obviously be unreasonable to require them to be brought up to the standard of plumbing and other facilities required under the Lodging House Bylaw. But any dwellings which are in an insanitary condition and cannot be condemned for lack of alternative accommodation should be brought up to a reasonable minimum standard.

It is no less important that those families with children at present occupying rooms in the district be found adequate alternative accommodation without delay, since not only the housekeeping room as such, but the district itself, is entirely unsuited for family living.